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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Macmillan's Views on Reply to Soviet Note

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As you will remember, Ambassador Caccia left with me on Monday a letter embodying the Prime Minister's views on the nature of a reply to the last Soviet note. With much of it, such as his ideas on composition, I think we can agree without too much difficulty. His central point, however, is that while accepting a Foreign Ministers meeting in May he believes we should in our reply state the willingness of the French, British and United States Governments to attend a Summit Meeting at the end of July or during the first week of August. The agenda for this meeting he thinks should be broad. The Prime Minister's emphasis on this point of course derives from his conviction gained in Moscow that effective negotiation on Berlin, Germany or anything else must be with Khrushchev himself.

In the draft note which we sent to our allies at the end of last week we dealt with the matter of a Summit conference by first stating our acceptance of a Four Power meeting at the Foreign Minister level in Geneva on May 11 and then saying, "Progress made by the Foreign Ministers in dealing with these problems could open up prospects for a successful meeting of Heads of Government."

I recommend that we retain this formulation but give Mr. Macmillan private assurances that you would be prepared to attend a Summit meeting in July or early August even if the Foreign Ministers in fact made no progress. I suggest this because I believe that Khrushchev does desire a Summit meeting and if we meet his wish now before the Foreign Ministers

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meet the latter conference could be expected to accomplish nothing at all. On the other hand if we dangle a Summit meeting before him as a reward for progress at the Foreign Ministers meeting, then we would enhance the slim possibility of something constructive coming out of the May meeting of Foreign Ministers.

If you approve this recommendation I would then propose to call in the British Ambassador and so inform him. I would at the same time tell him that the less important points of tactics or language can, we believe, be successfully worked out in Paris where representatives of the governments concerned are now meeting to concert our replies.

/S/ CHRISTIAN A. HERTER
Acting Secretary

S/S - RO

MAR12, 1966

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